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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR APRIL 7, 2005

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for April 7, 2005.

Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

SABAH (GUNEY) / EVRENSEL / BOLGE / EKSPRES: Public finance officers, after going on a two-day strike of withdrawing from their work, gathered at a rally in front of the two Tax Office Branches and marched towards the AKP (Justice and Development Party) Provincial Headquarters in Adana. Public office workers' unions organized the rally to try to force the withdrawal of the new Income Administration Draft Law prepared by the Turkish Parliament. The new law reportedly envisages poor solutions to problems of income administration.

OZGUR GUNDEM: During a meeting with DEHAP (Democratic People's Party) Provincial Chairmen, Tuncer Bakirhan, DEHAP National Chairman, pointed out that a nationalist tide has been at work Turkey after the Newruz celebrations. According to Bakirhan, this nationalist tide was not only against the Kurds, but also against the EU supporters and the liberal circles in Turkey. Moreover, Bakirhan criticized the Turkish governors for remaining silent when an official of the state expressed last week that the noted writer Orhan Pamuk's books should be burnt.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The paper shows a photo of three children in Koprubasi hamlet of Dicle district in Diyarbakir, crossing the Dicle River on a very small and simple boat. The lack of a viable road (note: and presumably, bridge) requires the children of Koprubasi to cross the river on a feeble boat to reach their schools. It is reported that the neighboring villagers do not welcome the idea of a road construction, since any road to be built would have to cross over their fields.

EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM: While the "human shields" were being arrested, military operations in the Cudi and Gabar Mountains reportedly intensified and the extent of the operations widened. Among the security forces increasingly deployed in the region were military personnel allegedly disguised in "guerilla" clothes. It is also noted that the Bolu Commando Brigade, which allegedly was responsible for the disappearance of a detained group of villagers during the operations conducted in 1993-1994, was reportedly deployed at Cukurca in Hakkari province.

ZAMAN: Zaman reports that the military operations conducted in Sirnak and Hakkari (Cudi and Gabar Mountains) covered the border area with Iraq as well. The warplanes and helicopters were being used to uncover the terrorists' shelters. Osman Gunes, Sirnak Governor, said that no information was shared with him about the details of the operations.

BOLGE / EKSPRES: Another moderate earthquake with a magnitude of 3.2 on the Richter scale shook Adana yesterday at 8.59 a.m. The Chamber of Geophysical Engineers Adana Chairperson said that people felt the shake more strongly because the epicenters of the recent earthquakes were deep under the ground. However, it was not known whether these quakes were predecessors of a bigger one.

EKSPRES / BOLGE: Mitsuhiro Toyama, Cultural Attache of the Japanese Embassy, paid a visit to Cahit Kirac, Adana Governor. Toyama will be visiting Aytac Durak, Adana Mayor, and Chambers of Commerce and Industry, as well.

EVRENSEL: Yuksekova District Jandarma Command held a meeting on April 2 with the relatives of the "guerillas" (note: read PKK), who engage in conflicts with the Turkish military in the mountains. Sixty people reportedly attended the meeting. A Jandarma Command official reportedly said that nobody wanted any more shedding of blood and solicited help from the families to convince their children to stop fighting. Reportedly, all the families rejected this request and demanded that a general amnesty be granted to the people.

EKSPRES / BOLGE: The IP (Labour Party) launched a campaign in Adana's Inonu Park to call for the end to the U.S. presence in Incirlik Airbase. Sedat Memili, the Provincial Chairperson of IP, said that the Turkish Military should exercise full control of the Incirlik Base and that the U.S. should be prevented from using Incirlik Airbase in military operations against both the countries in the (middle eastern) region and Turkey.

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Mehmet Aslan, Gaziantep Chamber of Commerce, praised Hulusi Kilic, Turkey's Consul to Aleppo, as being one of the "heroes" of the strengthening relationship between Gaziantep (in Turkey) and Aleppo (in Syria).

YENI SAFAK / RADIKAL / EVRENSEL: The November 21 killing of 12-year-old Ugur and his father Ahmet Kaymaz in Kiziltepe district of Mardin was (see press summary 11/30) featured in article in The Independent, a British newspaper, entitled "Bullet-riddled body of child casts shadow over Turkey's EU aspirations".

RADIKAL / ZAMAN: It was reportedly discovered that twenty tons of plane fuel was stolen from the NATO oil pipeline in Osmaniye. Two people allegedly dug a tunnel to the pipeline from the basement of the house they rented twenty days ago. When the authorities noticed that pressure in the pipeline decreased, they conducted a raid to a house they suspected and discovered a tanker truck full of plane fuel parked outside.

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